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ABSTRACT

In this guidebook, the Public Education Religion Studies Center (PERSC) provides answers to questions frequently raised about religion studies in public schools. It is useful to those initiating study about religion in public schools and to those evaluating both formal and informal study and experiences now part of a school's program or activities. For a description of the purpose and activities of PERSC see related document SO 008 363. The 11 questions under consideration include: (1) Is It Legal to Teach About Religion in the Public School? (2) Why Should Religion Studies Be Included in the Public School Curriculum? (3) What Are the General Goals for Religion Studies? (4) How Should Peligion Be Defined for Public School Study? (5) How Do You Study About Religion in Public Schools? (6) Where Is the Best Place to Include Religion Studies in the Curriculum? (7) What Are the Qualifications for the Teacher of Public School Religion Studies? (8) What Criteria Should Be Used in Selecting Teaching Materials? (9) Are There Any Curriculum Materials Which Meet These Criteria? (10) What Suggestions Can Educators Give to Citizens and Community Groups Who Seek Help? (11) What Help Can PERSC Offer Teachers or Schools? (Author/DE)

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Public Education Religion Studies: Questions and Answers

Peter Bracher/James V. Panoch/Nicholas Piediscalzi/James K. Uphoff

With a Foreword by Justice Tom C. Clark

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Public Education Religion Studies Center/Wright State University/Dayton, Ohio 45431/1974

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Dedicated to

WARREN H. ABRAHAM

Dean

College of Continuing and Community Education

Wright State University

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FOREWORD

by

TOM C. CLARK
Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court
(Retired)

"If I had me a job to pick out," said Mr. Dooley, "I'd be a judge. . . I have th' judicyal timperamint. I hate wurruk."

If I were younger and had me a "job to pick out," I'd join the staff of the recently activated Public Education Religion Studies Center at Wright State. My choice is not because "I hate wurruk" but because I love challenge.

The Center offers a most exciting opportunity, that is, to prove that the study of religion is a legitimate function of public education.

I verily believe that it is. All that needs be done is to develop the know-how as to teaching it in the public schools. "To what extent," as my Brother Brennan so well said in Schempp, "and at what points in the curriculum, religious materials should be cited are matters which the courts ought to entrust very largely to the experienced officials who superintend our Nation's public schools. They are experts in such matters and we are not."

This guidebook is an excellent beginning. As the Court itself held in Schempp: "One's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization."

The Center fills a void that we have permitted to exist too long in our public school system. The Center has not only my hearty congratulations but my prayers for the success of its auspicious undertaking.

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INTRODUCTION

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution provides for the separation of church and state. Within limits defined by the Supreme Court, religious institutions are to refrain from influencing government and government is neither to advance nor inhibit religion(s). Thus both freedom of religion and freedom from religion are guaranteed. This commitment provides one of the important foundation stones for the establishment and maintenance of an open, just, and peaceful multi-religious society.

The Public Education Religion Studies Center (PERSC) supports this commitment to religious freedom. The academic study of religion can contribute to the protection of this freedom by providing information and experiences which help to dispel the stereotypes that encourage religious prejudice and discrimination. Such study can also help develop a sense of human community and an appreciation of our common humanity in the midst of our diversities. To foster such values does not, in our opinion, violate the injunction against fostering religion--even in the broadest definition of that term.

There are, of course, other important reasons for studying about religion. For example, religion has had a continuing influence on human history. To develop an adequate understanding of history thus requires the study of religion. (This reason and others will be discussed more fully later in this booklet.)

The purpose of PERSC is to encourage and facilitate increased and improved teaching about religion within constitutional bounds, mainly in elementary and secondary public schools and where applicable in relevant areas of post-secondary education, especially in teacher education programs. PERSC emphasizes the natural inclusion of study about religion within regular curricular offerings such as history, art, English, music, and geography; the addition of specific courses or units such as "Religious Literature," "World Religions," and "Religion and Literature"; and the improvement of pre- and in-service teacher education.

PERSC is dedicated to a comprehensive and nonsectarian study about religion as one of the significant areas of man's life and thought. The goal of this study is a lucid understanding of religion and its role in human affairs.

Through the mail, in classrooms and at conferences, in personal conversation and in the public press, questions about public education religion studies are repeatedly raised. This guidebook provides PERSC's answers to the most frequently asked questions. It should be useful to those initiating study about religion in public schools and to those evaluating both formal and informal study and experiences now part of a school's program or activities.

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1. IS IT LEGAL TO TEACH ABOUT RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

The academic study of religion in the public schools has not--contrary to most public opinion--been prohibited by the United States Supreme Court. In fact, the Court stated emphatically in 1962 and again in 1963 that education without the study of religion is incomplete and that such study is not prohibited by the First Amendment. Justice Clark made these points without qualification when in 1963 he wrote the majority opinion98-1) of the Court in Abington v. Schempp and Murray v. Curlett. Justice Brennan supported Justice Clark by adding a concurring opinion:

> The holding of the Court today plainly does not foreclose teaching about the Holy Scriptures or about the differences between religious sects in classes in literature or history. Indeed, whether or not the Bible is involved, it would be impossible to teach meaningfully many subjects in the social sciences or the humanities without some mention of religion. To what extent, and at what points in the curriculum, religious materials should be cited are matters which the courts ought to entrust very largely to the experienced officials who superintend our Nation's public schools.

The Court also recognized that an educational system which excludes study about religion implicitly teaches that religion is not an important part of human culture and history, which is untrue. Justice Goldberg underscored this point in his concurring opinion to the Schempp decision:

> Neither government nor this Court can or should ignore the significance of the fact that a vast portion of our people believe in and worship God and that many of our legal, political and personal values derive historically from religious teachings. Government must inevitably take cognizance of the existence of religion and, indeed, under certain circumstances the First Amendment may require that it do so. And it seems clear to me from the opinions in the present and past cases that the Court would recognize the propriety of providing military chaplains and of teaching about religion, as distinguished from the teaching of religion, in the public schools.

Thus, a school system which excludes study about religion in the name of neutrality or adherence to a Constitutional prohibition is not neutral nor does it adhere to the Constitution. Justice Brennan alluded to this problem in his concurring opinion in Abington v. Schempp: "Nothing in the Constitution compels the organs of government to be blind to what everyone perceives--that religious differences among Americans have important and pervasive implications for our Society."

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These Supreme Court dicta make it clear that it is legal to study about religion in the public schools. However, citizens and educators still find it difficult to distinguish between religion studies and the practice of religion. James V. Panoch, PERSC's Field Coordinator, has distilled the essence of the Supreme Court decisions into a helpful set of statements outlining what constitutes legal and illegal religion studies in the public schools:

The school may sponsor the study of religion,
but may not sponsor the practice of religion.

The school may expose students to all religious views,
but may not impose any particular view.

The school's approach to religion is one of instruction,
not one of indoctrination.

The function of the school is to educate about all religions,
not to convert to any one religion.

The school's approach to religion is academic,
not devotional.

The school should study what all people believe,
but should not teach a pupil what he should believe.

The school should strive for student awareness of all religions,
but should not press for student acceptance of any one religion.

The school should seek to inform the student about various beliefs,
but should not seek to conform him to any one belief.

In summary, teaching about religion in the public schools is legal and educationally valuable when it is a part of the academic program, when it does not give preferential or derogatory treatment to religion in general or to any single religion, and when it does not constitute a religious practice.

2. WHY SHOULD RELIGION STUDIES BE INCLUDED IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM?

The religious factor in human history is a significant one. It is deeply embedded in most of the world's history, in its literary documents, and in its social institutions. Consequently a curriculum which does not include study about religion is incomplete. As Raymond English, Director of the Educational Research Council of America's Social Science Program, points out, students are deprived of knowledge of an important dimension of human experience:

> To study human behavior and societies without paying attention to religious motivations is like studying chemistry without recognizing the presence of oxygen in the atmosphere. Men behave as they do for a variety of reasons, and one powerful causal factor is their value system--their beliefs about life's meaning and purpose. These beliefs are their religion--their ultimate concept of reality.

Moreover, to exclude religion studies from the school is, as the American Association of School Administrators suggested in 1964, to misrepresent religion and to distort history:

> A curriculum which ignored religion would itself have serious religious implications. It would seem to proclaim that religion has not been as real in men's lives as health or politics or economics. By omission it would appear to deny that religion has been and is important in man's history--a denial of the obvious. In day-by-day practice, the topic cannot be avoided. As an integral part of man's culture, it must be included.

Thus, since one of the public schools' tasks is to provide students with a complete education, study about religion must be made a part of the curriculum.

Also, in a time like ours when societal values are changing and world cultural values come into conflict, it is important to study about the sources of values. Religion is a source of values for many societies and peoples. Therefore, it is important for the public schools to help students understand the role of religion in value formation and value conservation or transformation.

In summary, commitment to comprehensive education requires the inclusion of religion studies in the curriculum.

3. WHAT ARE THE GENERAL GOALS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION RELIGION STUDIES?

The best answer to this question is provided by the Florida State University Religion-Social Studies Curriculum Project staff. They suggest that the general goals for public education religion studies should include:

I. An understanding of

- A. The nature of religion
  1. Its essential characteristics
  2. Its development, organization, and transmission
  3. Its universality and variety
- B. The place (or role) of religion
  1. Religion in its cultural context
  2. Its relation to economic, social, political, educational, and domestic institutions
  3. Its relation to man's humanistic endeavors: art, music, language, literature, etc.
- C. The methods of study in religion
  1. The variety of ways of inquiry
  2. The legitimacy of the study of religion, and the distinction between study of and adherence to religion

II. An appreciation of

- A. The place of religion in human history
- B. The role of religion in private motivations, habits, and aspirations
- C. The varieties of religious expressions, understandings, and effects
- D. The necessity for mutual tolerance

III. Development of skills in

- A. Perceptive application of the processes of inquiry to religious concepts
- B. Intelligent development of moral reasoning and value judgment
- C. Careful description of religious phenomena
- D. Fair-minded explanations of religious practices and beliefs

E. Reasoned analysis of differences and similarities among religions

F. Responsible evaluation of religion's function in both individual and cultural contexts

4. HOW SHOULD RELIGION BE DEFINED FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDY?

Like most contemporary teachers about religion, the authors of this guidebook find it necessary to work with two definitions of religion, one narrow and the other broad.

The narrow definition comes to mind immediately when the word "religion" is used: an institutionalized set of beliefs, dogmas, ethical prescriptions, and cultic practices which center around devotion to and service of a particular deity or set of deities. Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Bha'i, for example, are religions of this type.

The broad definition envisions religion as any faith or set of values to which an individual or group gives ultimate loyalty. Theravada Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, secularism, humanism, scientism, nationalism, money, and power illustrate this concept of religion.

There are at least three important factors which make it necessary for those who teach about religion to use both of these definitions in their work. First, the United States Supreme Court in recent years has broadened the legal definition of religion. For example, in the 1961 Torcaso case, the Court, hearing the suit of a Maryland notary public who had been barred from office because he would not profess belief in the existence of God, stated that "neither a State nor the Federal Government can constitutionally . . . aid those religions based on a belief in the existence of God as against those religions founded on different beliefs."

To make certain that no one misunderstood this position, the Court added, "Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism, and others." At the same time, the Court related its opinion in the Torcaso case to Everson v. Board of Education (1947) and McCollum v. Board of Education (1948), pointing out that the legal definitions and principles used in the Torcaso case had been applied previously in the Everson and McCollum decisions. By relating the Torcaso decision to these educational cases, the Court made clear that the broad definition of religion applies to the field of education.

Second, religions, in the narrow sense of the term, are no longer institutions of primary influence and power in most Western and many Eastern societies. They have been replaced by what Paul Tillich calls quasi-religions, for example, secularism, scientism, nationalism, and humanism. These faiths by which men live function as religions. Also, it is possible for people to use traditional religious symbols to justify an ultimate commitment which is contrary to the meaning those symbols originally conveyed. Will

Herberg, for example, suggests that most Americans live by a civil religion which he calls "The American Way of Life," although they use the symbols and institutions of the Jewish and Christian traditions to justify and uphold this primarily secular-nationalistic commitment.

Third, contemporary life is filled with intense religious quests and attempts at religious reform. Many of these activities take place outside the boundaries of traditional religions. They are found in the works of artists and scholars and protest and counter-culture groups. For example, the novels of Albert Camus and John Updike, the works of Picasso and Chagall, the compositions of Leonard Bernstein and Gian Carlo Menotti, and the writings of Erik H. Erikson and Paul Goodman are replete with serious religious questions and quests. There are significant parallels and similarities between the pronouncements and judgments of the Hebrew prophets and some contemporary protest and counter-culture movements. Many of the recent experiments at communal living and new life styles share the same religious intensity and attempts at religious reform found in the monastic movements of the West and in the utopian sect groups which have had an on-going history of experimentation since the founding of our country.

Because religion--both in the narrow and broad sense--is one of the means by which individuals and groups organize and give priority to their values, the educator's understanding of the study about religion needs to be extended to include value clarification as a part of study about religion. As noted above, many people give their ultimate loyalty to a universal value or set of values rather than to God or a supreme being. Since, according to the broad definition of religion, such acts are religious, value clarification studies become an important part of the academic study of religion.

Value clarification involves a two-fold process. First, students discover and understand 1) the values to which individuals and communities commit themselves; 2) how such commitments are justified; and 3) the consequences of such commitments. Second, they discover their own value commitments and the consequences of these commitments for their own lives and the lives of others.

Confronted with such complex and sensitive issues as these, teachers clearly need not only a broadened definition of religion but also a special approach to study about religion.

5. HOW DO YOU STUDY ABOUT RELIGION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

Academic study of religion is a non-doctrinal, open, critical, and empathetic examination of all religions, narrowly and broadly defined, both past and present. This approach seeks to avoid condemnation and destructive judgments and to produce understanding and appreciation. Through such a study of religion the student is able eventually to understand the role religion plays in forming, conserving, reforming, or stultifying societies and cultures. The same approach

is applied to the study of the sacred scriptures of religions. They are studied as significant documents which present the most important literary expression of a given religious tradition. They also are studied for the effects they have on the religious communities and cultures in which they have been or are operative.

Robert A. Spivey and Rodney F. Allen recently wrote that the aim of the academic study of religion is to create religious literacy. The teacher's role in this process, they suggest, is to help students raise and consider three questions: (1) What is religion? (2) What are some of the significant religious traditions? (3) What is the relationship of religion and culture? The teacher who engages in this process must, as much as possible, prevent his own religious faith and values from entering and distorting this search for literacy. This does not mean that he must become cold and detached in his presentations. On the contrary, the teacher about religion like any other effective teacher engages in what Philip H. Phenix calls "disciplined intersubjectivity." According to Phenix, to be academic and objective about religion "is to enter into the subjectivity of persons other than oneself in a disciplined way . . . This is the fundamental mark of human intelligence. We are humanly intelligent to the degree that we are capable of getting inside points of view other than our own, in a way that is genuinely appreciative."

Admittedly, no human being can be totally objective about the subject he teaches. The teacher about religion--like any other teacher--can make his own and his students' biases a teaching tool by pointing out his and their lack of objectivity and inviting them to join him in discovering where he and they are not objective in their study about religion or other subjects and the opinions they bring to their studies. Ideally, such awareness is a major goal of education.

It is important to note in conclusion that there is a difference between the study about religion and the practice and propagation of religion. The public school is not a church or a religious institution. It is a place for academic pursuits, a community where students and instructors can join in an objective study of events, beliefs, practices and issues, including secular commitments. This study should lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of these aspects of their lives and the lives of others.

6. WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO INCLUDE RELIGION STUDIES IN THE CURRICULUM?

Although special courses in religion studies--for example, in the history of religions or in religious literature--have their place in the curriculum for students with a particular interest in religion, perhaps the most effective method of presenting religion studies is the simplest one. Religion can be dealt with whenever it naturally arises and wherever it naturally belongs within the

regular curriculum. It may thus be dealt with when relevant as an aspect of a subject under study or it may be dealt with sometimes more formally as a unit within a course. By thus integrating religion studies with other, related subjects in the curriculum, teachers should be able to enhance the student's understanding of religion and religious literature.

Opportunities for a naturally integrated study of religion abound in the social sciences. When a class discusses the migration of Europeans to the New World, religious motives ought to be considered as well as economic, political, and social ones. A study of the Constitution is incomplete without an examination of the relationship of the First and Fourteenth Amendments to each other. Suitable case studies and materials dealing with religious freedom are available in the Harvard Public Issues Series and from the National Council for the Social Studies. Obviously, an understanding of the people of other nations or hemispheres is impossible without an awareness of their religious beliefs and ethical systems.

In the humanities, the impact and influence of religion is immense. Great literature of the past--the work of Sophocles or Dante, for example--often requires some knowledge of a particular religious system and often introduces religious themes as well. In fact, most literature classes constantly encounter biblical and religious symbols, allusions, and themes. The Old Man and the Sea not only invites discussion of biblical images but--like much of Hemingway's writing--also engages the student in consideration of religious themes. And the art and music of most cultures are also strongly influenced by religion.

Religious themes and motifs are not confined to the fine arts or to high culture. Films (The Seventh Seal, Midnight Cowboy), cartoons ("Peanuts"), popular music ("Jesus Christ Superstar," "My Lord/Hare Krishna," "Turn, Turn, Turn"), best sellers (Stranger in a Strange Land, Love Story, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest), and even the daily newspaper all provide numerous examples of religious matters with relevance to many subject areas. The hit recording "Try a Little Kindness" echoes the theme of the New Testament parable of the Good Samaritan. A cartoon showing two soldiers observing a drunken comrade and saying to each other, "There's Goliath! Stoned Again!" loses both significance and humor for those unfamiliar with the biblical account of David and Goliath.

Even science courses provide opportunities to deal with religious issues. For example, consideration by a science class of the function and use of a kidney machine almost inevitably raises questions about how patients are chosen to use these machines. Organ transplants and the development of new weapons bring up similar values questions. Study of evolutionary theories can lead to discussion of how various religious communities have reacted to Darwinian and neo-Darwinian views on the origin of species by means of natural selection. Units on ecology may have to deal with the problem of how basic religious commitments--for example, Franciscan, Calvinistic, Jewish, or Buddhist--determine

one's views of nature and the treatment of it.

The elementary curriculum also provides occasions for the natural introduction of religion and values issues. Study of the family, a typical topic in the primary grades, may raise both religious and value problems. This is particularly true if a class is studying the family patterns of widely different cultures --American, Eskimo, and Japanese, for example. A comparative study of these cultures, even on an elementary level, will raise questions about the impact of both religion and values systems upon mankind. Comparison/contrast, in fact, is one of the most effective methods for dealing with religious and values topics as long as the teacher has no "hidden agenda" that leads to invidious comparisons of particular religions, cultures, or values.

Study of the exploration of the New World may lead not only to the building of a model of a Spanish mission but also to some discussion of the role of religion in European discovery and expansion. Social studies textbooks for the elementary grades always include sections dealing with the community and community helpers. Many of these texts recognize religion as one element in the community, if only by depicting a town with an illustration that includes a church building. Some books picture a family in church and ask a question such as, "What are these people doing?" Many of the stories in the reading books used in elementary classrooms raise values issues, and among the books for young readers with religious or values themes are Twenty and Ten by C. H. Bishop, Eddie's Pay Dirt by Carolyn Haywood, The Courage of Sarah Noble by Alice Dalgliesh, and The Bronze Bow by E. G. Speare. Teachers, in short, will find ample opportunity to deal naturally with religion.

Naturally integrated study of religion fulfills three major objectives. First, content is presented in a more complete and academically honest manner. Second, it enables students to develop an awareness and understanding of religion--its impact on man, its values, its problems, and its content. And, thirdly, it achieves these objectives without a disproportionate and undue emphasis upon religion.

Opportunities for special units on religion and related topics are almost as common as those for natural inclusion. Such units have become particularly common at the secondary level in recent years as more materials have become available. Units dealing with the Bible as literature, with the religious literature of the West, or with religion in literature are examples focused on literary study. In the broader area of the humanities, units have been developed around such topics as personal philosophies and man's relationship to God. Social studies units have dealt with comparative religions, world religions, and religious thought. The use of units of study on religion topics has been less common at the elementary level. However, an example of a unit suitable for fifth-graders is a university-workshop-developed unit on major holidays of five major world religions. Students study and observe the customs of several cultures. Buddha's birthday is celebrated with a parade, costumes, and construction of a pagoda. The Pakistani New Year celebration of Basanth is observed by flying kites.

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It is, of course, a simple step from a unit to the development of a special course. Such courses have become increasingly common in recent years as secondary curricula have become more flexible and as new instructional materials have become available. The major problem with the special course (and to a lesser degree with the special unit) is that it is likely to get the individual teacher in deeper than he is prepared for. Special courses often require a broader and deeper knowledge of material than many teachers are trained to provide. The risk of inadequate training in content areas and of unintentional bias on the part of such teachers has been a source of serious concern to both scholars and religious leaders. Their concern should not be taken lightly. On both counts, a major problem is that as yet relatively little instructional material has been prepared and relatively few opportunities are available for teachers to prepare themselves to teach in the field of religion studies. However, where materials and expert guidance are available, there is no reason why special courses, as well as natural inclusion, cannot be introduced into the curriculum.

7. WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE TEACHER OF PUBLIC SCHOOL RELIGION STUDIES?

Ideally, teacher competency in religion studies is no different from teacher competency in any other discipline. However, the legal and political problems created by our constitutional separation of church and state, the long-standing Protestant domination of our culture with its frequent misrepresentation and/or rejection of minority religious views and the religious pluralism of our present society require special additions to the usual guidelines established for evaluating teacher competency. Thus, the following guidelines developed by PERSC consist of one section dealing with dimensions of teacher competency common to all fields and a second section presenting aspects of teacher competency unique to religion studies in American public education.

I.

Competent religion studies teachers, like all teachers, should be professionally qualified, emotionally mature, and pedagogically sound.

A. Professional qualification is demonstrated by certification by the state in which a teacher practices and by the maintenance of good professional standing.

B. Emotional maturity is demonstrated by the possession of a secure self-image and set of values which enable a teacher to be open with and accepting of students with different views and life-styles.

C. Pedagogical soundness is demonstrated by
   1. use of the same procedures for planning, developing, and evaluating curricula as are employed in designing other academic programs;
   2. use of pedagogical methods appropriate to the particular materials for given courses;
   3. choice of materials which show awareness of and sophistication in educational methodologies appropriate to the age level of students for which the materials are intended;
   4. knowledge of developmental psychology and of the concepts and teaching methods appropriate to each stage of maturation; and
   5. knowledge of and ability to use a wide variety of print and non-print materials and media.

II.

Competent religion studies teachers should also be well-versed in the legal issues surrounding religion studies in public education, academically qualified in religion as an academic subject, and non-confessional in approach.

A. Understanding of legal issues is demonstrated by a thorough knowledge of the U. S. Supreme Court decisions as well as state and local laws pertaining to religious practices and religion studies in the public schools and of the parameters suggested by these laws for academic study of religion in the public schools.
B. Academic qualification in religion studies is demonstrated by
   1. an adequate knowledge of religion in its formal and informal, institutional and non-institutional, communal and personal, inherited and experienced manifestations;
   2. a knowledge of the diverse ways in which religion is expressed, such as ritual, myth, ceremony, festival, symbols, stories, music, and art;
   3. awareness of and ability to use several different methods of studying about religion, such as the history of religions, the phenomenology of religion, the philosophy of religion, the psychology of religion, the sociology of religion, etc.; and
   4. a knowledge of both the positive and negative functions of religion in human culture and history.
C. A non-confessional approach to religion studies is demonstrated by
   1, a pluralistic approach;
   2. self-knowledge about one's religious and value commitments, about one's attitudes toward formal religion, and about one's religions biases and cultural limitations so as to be free to present fairly and discerningly various religious options and to teach about

religions without proselytising for one's own position;
3. openness to and empathy for alternative religious and non-religious points of view among students and a willingness to listen to them and accept their feelings and underlying beliefs; and
4. dedication to building a sense of human community through cultivating an understanding of and respect for all people and an appreciation of our common humanity in the midst of our diversities.

Given the special requirements needed for competency as a teacher of religion studies, it is vital for colleges, universities, and professional schools to provide a comprehensive range of pre- and in-service training and experiences. Interdisciplinary work is especially needed to help teachers experience the interrelatedness of religion studies with other academic disciplines.

8. WHAT CRITERIA SHOULD BE USED IN SELECTING TEACHING MATERIALS?

PERSC recommends that all curricular material be evaluated according to six basic criteria established by PERSC's Professional Advisory Council.

A. Is the material educationally sound and pedagogically effective?

Curricular material should always be usable and appropriate in terms of subject matter, of the abilities of students, and of the competence of teachers. Information, concepts, illustrations, and the reading level of the material should be suited to the students who will use it, and the general presentation should be in keeping with their abilities. Material should reflect a sophisticated awareness of educational methodologies and incorporate appropriate pedagogical techniques. Material should also be presented in ways suited to the skills and training of the teachers who will use it. In addition, it should provide adequate guidance to reference, research, and supplementary material and help in lesson preparation, including suggestions for the use of the material. Finally, material should--where appropriate--encourage and assist teachers to use audio-visual materials and other non-book resources.

B. Does the material reflect an academically responsible approach?

Curricular material should be based on sound scholarship in the field of religion. If possible, it should employ primary sources or follow them faithfully. If secondary sources are used, they should be recognized as academically responsible, as faithful to original sources, and as avoiding bias by presenting alternative viewpoints. Content should be non-confessional, pluralistic, balanced, compre-

hensive, and factually accurate, distinguishing historical from confessional fact. Material should reflect an awareness of scholarly definitions of religion and a concern for the relationship of religion and culture. It should also reflect both formal and institutional as well as informal and personal religious phenomena and the many ways in which they are expressed. Thus material should help students achieve religious literacy and an awareness of diverse religious phenomena.

Although the basic approach should be critical and analytical, material should seek to combine the scholar's "outside" view with the adherent's "inside" view. It should avoid onesidedness by presenting traditional as well as contemporary academic interpretations of religions and their scriptures. Similarly, material should avoid reductionist approaches (for example, purely psychological or sociological ones) that limit the perspectives from which religion is studied. While curricular material need not be interdisciplinary, religion studies are not limited to the confines of traditional academic disciplines. Thus, material may be interdisciplinary in its approach to religion study. While it must be academically responsible, curricular material which assumes a high level of scholarly aptitude by either teacher or pupil should be carefully evaluated. Material should always reflect a scholarly competence that is appropriate to those who will use it. Finally, it should be noted that while no single piece of curricular material is likely to meet all of these criteria, it is essential for the teacher to select that material which comes closest to meeting them and to compensate for its deficiencies.

C. Is the material sensitive to the religious and political problems of America's pluralistic society?

Because of the social and political reality of divergent viewpoints in American life, curricular material should be nonconfessional, making a pluralistic, not positioned, presentation of content. Such a goal can be achieved in part if material is presented not solely from an analytical, scholarly point of view. It should also reflect the point of view of the people who have experienced it, preserving the integrity and authenticity of their particular religious commitment. In this way material can be sensitive to the views, beliefs, and concerns of religious minorities. In addition, material should be open-ended, seeking not consensus but understanding and appreciation of the values that lead to different religious commitments in both the broad and narrow sense (see pp. 5-6), especially with the object of breaking down the stereotypes that lead to religious prejudices and discrimination and of helping students to accept the validity of other religious experiences than their own.

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D. Does the material reflect a non-confessional and inter-faith perspective?

Although it is not essential that curricular material be developed jointly by people of different religious faiths, it should certainly reflect the non-confessional perspective such interfaith development produces. Ecumenical teams should contribute to the development of material as authors, consultants, or field testers so that in the course of the process divergent points of view are reflected. Materials carefully developed in light of the criteria discussed in sections B and C above are likely to achieve the objectivity and pluralism of viewpoint that an interfaith perspective is meant to assure.

E. Does the material reflect and has it been written within the parameters of the major Supreme Court decisions?

Although curricular material which meets the criteria laid out in sections B and C above will probably be legally appropriate, it is important to make sure that it is as objective as possible and does not exclude, favor, or derogate any particular religious group or sect. Material must be non-proselytizing. If the use of material which does not meet these criteria is unavoidable, it may be necessary to use materials representing many positions and beliefs to achieve a legally appropriate balance and objectivity. However, it should be stressed that the legality of curricular materials is best assured by careful attention to the guidelines in the preceding criteria.

F. Has the material been field tested?

The success of any curricular material in the classroom depends to a considerable extent upon the degree to which it has been field tested. An adequate testing program in actual classroom situations should involve students and teachers of varied backgrounds, abilities, and faiths and, in the case of teachers, of varied academic and pedagogical preparation as well. Curricular material should be evaluated as fully as a determination of these matters permits.

In summary, curricular material for teaching about religion in the public schools should be pedagogically sound, academically responsible, sensitive, non-confessional, legally appropriate, and field tested. These general criteria imply material that is appropriate as to subject matter, age level of students, and teacher competence; material that is pluralistic, balanced, and comprehensive in content; material that employs objective data and an analytical but empathetic approach; and, finally, material that encourages awareness of and respect for each person's religion whether traditional or secular.

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9. ARE THERE ANY CLASSROOM CURRICULUM MATERIALS WHICH MEET THESE CRITERIA?

During the past decade some excellent curriculum materials which meet the criteria suggested above have been developed. A representative sample of books for different levels and fields is presented below. More extensive lists are available from PERSC.

A series of social studies units developed in Florida is designed to enrich regular high school classes:

> Issues in Religion (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025) is a three-volume series produced by the Religion-Social Studies Curriculum Project at Florida State University. The titles are Religious Issues in American Culture, Religious Issues in Western Civilization, and Religious Issues in World Culture. Each volume consists of ten teaching units. Each unit analyzes a religious controversy through directed readings of primary sources. Teacher's guides are available.

A complete social studies curriculum for the elementary grades developed in Cleveland includes units on religion:

> Social Science Program (Allyn and Bacon, 470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA 02210) is a complete K-8 Social Studies curriculum being produced by the Educational Research Council of America. Religion is one of six integrating themes around which the curriculum is built. Included is a fifth-grade unit, Four World Views, which considers the Confucianism of China, the Buddhism of India, the religion of the early Hebrews in Palestine, and the humanism and naturalism of the Greeks. Teacher's guides are available.

An anthology of biblical selections developed by an inter-faith editorial team is intended for high school English and social studies classes:

> The Bible Reader (Benziger, Bruce and Glencoe, 100 W. Brown Street, Riverside, NJ 08075) is a special edition of the Bible designed for public school use by a team of ecumenical scholars. Key passages are presented in various translations with introductory articles, notes, and essays. A teacher's guide with suggested lesson plans is available.

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Another anthology, designed and field tested in Pennsylvania, is intended for use in high school English classes:

> Religious Literature of the West (Augsburg Publishing House, 426 S. Fifth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415) is a semester course for the high school produced under the direction of the Religious Studies Department of Pennsylvania State University pursuant to an act of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. Selections from the sacred literature of Christians, Jews, and Muslims are studied.

Supplementary units for various grade levels have also been developed:

> Religious Freedom: Minority Faiths and Majority Rule (American Education Publication, Education Center, Columbus, OH 43216) is one in a series of supplemental social studies units for grades 7-12 produced by the Social Studies Project of Harvard University. General contemporary and historical background material is given, followed by a study of three specific Supreme Court cases involving compulsory attendance, the salute to the flag, and prayer and Bible reading. A teacher's guide is included.

> Trailmarks of Liberty (Houghton Mifflin Company, 110 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02107) is a series of three programs, one each for the elementary, junior high, and senior high levels, designed to acquaint the student with the important issues in American history through a study of key court cases. (The school prayer and Bible reading decisions are included.) The programs were developed by the Law in American Society Foundation. Unit titles include Law in a New Land (Grades 4-5), Great Cases of the Supreme Court (Grades 7-8), and Vital Issues of the Supreme Court (Grades 11-12).

Although a need still exists for new curriculum materials at all levels and in all subject areas and for upgrading some materials presently available, excellent materials do exist and more are published every year. However, there are many inferior materials widely advertized which are not adequate for public school use. Therefore, individuals responsible for choosing materials should evaluate them according to the criteria presented on pp. 12-14.

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10. WHAT SUGGESTIONS CAN EDUCATORS GIVE TO COMMUNITY GROUPS WHO SEEK TO HELP?

Curriculum for religion studies in the public schools should be developed in the same manner and for the same reasons that curriculum is developed for any other discipline. And like curriculum in other areas, it should be developed by teams of classroom teachers and curriculum coordinators implementing, through their planning and working sessions, local school board policies. Members of the community should serve in supportive or supplemental capacities only. Practically, this means that the curriculum team, at its own discretion, may accept advice, services, or supplies from the community, including religious leaders, institutions, or groups.

Members of local religious communities can be helpful in a variety of special ways. They may advise curriculum teams on handling sensitive issues. They may provide speakers for special emphases or hosts for field trips and even supply books and media materials if they meet the particular needs determined by the curriculum team. In utilizing such special services, everyone involved should understand that the methods and materials to be used must be finally determined by the curriculum team and not by the individuals or groups whose assistance is being sought. If they employ sectarian materials or personnel, curriculum teams must be especially careful that these resources are used solely for academic and non-confessional purposes.

Community leaders interested in helping to develop religion studies in the public schools in their communities, will find the following DOs and DON'Ts useful:

DO study this sensitive issue thoroughly both from the legal and educational sides and become well-informed by inviting knowledgeable speakers and/or using good films at your meetings, reading available materials, and attending special conferences. Be certain to know exactly what the U. S. Supreme Court said on this issue. Read the Abington v. Schempp and Murray v. Curlett decision and the American Association of School Administrator's report, Religion in the Public Schools (Harper and Row, 1965).

DO justify your request for religion studies solely on academic grounds. Education is incomplete without study about religion as one of the important dimensions of human history. The California Board of Education has said, "Our schools should have no hesitancy in teaching about religion. We urge our teachers to make clear the contributions of religion to our civilization, history, art, and ethics."

DON'T march into school administrator's offices making demands, threats, or accusations. Such behavior rarely accomplishes one's desired goals.

DO communicate to your school administrators your interest in the natural inclusion of religion studies in the regular curriculum and support of the schools' efforts in this regard. Separate courses or units such as "Bible as Literature" and "World Religions" might also be suggested.

DON'T urge the schools to fulfill the responsibility of the family and religious groups for providing religious instruction. Such prompting is based on the confusion of academic religion studies with instruction in a specific faith or in religion generally. The former is the task of the schools and the latter, the responsibility of the family and religious communities.

DO assist the school by a) providing "scholarships" for teachers to obtain better academic and professional training in this field through courses, institutes, workshops, etc.; b) helping to fund in-service education for the total faculty; c) purchasing some of the student materials currently available; and/or d) identifying and providing resource people and materials which can be utilized by the teachers in their classrooms.

DO cooperate actively with your schools in every way possible, such as PTA work, volunteer help, room parent, election worker, advisory council member, etc. This demonstrates that you are not a "one-issue" person and are concerned with a complete education and recognize the difficult task faced by the schools.

11. WHAT HELP CAN PERSC OFFER TEACHERS OR SCHOOLS?

PERSC PROVIDES:

A. Information on newly-published books, articles, media, and curricular materials.

B. Information on current workshops, seminars, and conferences.

C. A quarterly PERSC newsletter.

D. Introductory materials and media for planning and development.*

E. Consultation services for program and policy development.*

F. Preliminary evaluations of methods and materials.*

G. Criteria for pre- and in-service teacher education and certification programs.

H. Special sessions and meetings.*

I. Research materials through the Anna K. Panoch Special Collection at the Wright State University Library.

J. An individually designed M. Ed. or M.A.T. degree program with a concentration in religion studies at Wright State University.

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* On a fee basis.

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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